

# COMMUNITY CHARACTER



Community character relates to the stability, sustainability, and vitality of an area through the appropriate placement and interaction of land uses. Community character identifies the location of future land uses and appropriate locations for redevelopment in order to create, protect, and enhance places of distinction throughout the community.

The Eastgate Neighborhood primarily consists of a suburban, single-family character with some areas having more urban characteristics. The neighborhood is bounded by commercial uses along Texas Avenue and University Drive East with much of this perimeter area identified for redevelopment in the [Comprehensive Plan](#).

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a set of strategies to support the preservation of the neighborhood's character. Public input relating to character illustrated concerns of retaining the single-family character of the neighborhood, minimizing the impact of commercial and multi-family redevelopment, and encouraging compatible infill development. Based on these concerns, the following goals were developed for this chapter:

- ***Maintain a diverse mix of housing types;***
- ***Preserve larger lot single-family development patterns;***
- ***Reduce character impact of rental housing in the neighborhood; and***
- ***Promote redevelopment around the perimeter of the neighborhood that meets community needs and is complimentary to the neighborhood.***

This chapter focuses on four land use components that influence character:

- First, the anticipated, or future, land use assumptions within the neighborhood;
- Second, the existing zoning, or land use regulations, that impact how property is currently entitled to be developed;
- Third, site and redevelopment opportunities around the perimeter of the neighborhood; and
- Fourth, floodplain and greenway conservation.

This chapter first outlines basic planning information relating to each of the four components listed above. This information is in addition to the pertinent information found in [Appendix A, Existing Conditions Report](#). Following this information, the chapter outlines changes recommended for the [Comprehensive Plan](#), zoning options available to the neighborhood, site and development considerations for redevelopment areas, and floodplain management and greenway policies to support the overall goals of the chapter. This chapter outlines the details of strategies and actions to achieve the stated goals. Specific information about timelines, responsible parties, and estimated costs are reflected in [Chapter 5, Implementation](#).

## PLANNING INFORMATION

This section identifies key information that impacts the character of the Eastgate Neighborhood. It outlines public facility investments made in the area and a description of the land uses that were considered during the development of the strategies and actions for the Plan.

## Capital Investments

**Fire Station #6** - Funding to construct Fire Station #6 to serve the northeastern portion of College Station was approved in the 2008 bond election. The Fire Station will be constructed on vacant City-owned property located adjacent to Lions Park at the intersection of Tarrow Street and University Drive East. The project has been designed and construction is anticipated to commence in mid-2011.

## Types of Land Uses

The following are descriptions of the existing character designations found in the planning area based on the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. The locations of these designations are shown in **Map EC.3, Future Land Use and Community Character Map (Appendix A, Existing Conditions)**.

**Institutional/Public** - This land use designation is generally for areas that are, and are likely to remain, in some form of institutional or public activity. Examples include schools and libraries.



The majority of Eastgate is designated Neighborhood Conservation, which intends to preserve established neighborhoods.

**Natural Area – Protected** - This land use designation is generally for areas permanently protected from development. Such areas are preserved for their natural function or for park, recreation, or greenway opportunities. These include areas such as regulatory floodway, publicly owned open space, conservation easements, and public parks.

**Natural Area – Reserved** - This land use designation is generally for areas that represent a constraint to development and should be preserved for their natural function or open space qualities. These areas include floodplains and riparian buffers, as well as recreation facilities.

**Neighborhood Conservation** - This land use designation is generally for areas that are built-out and are not likely to be the focus of extensive infill development or redevelopment. Further, these areas were typically platted before current development regulations were in place which often results in non-conforming situations. These areas are appropriate for overlays or zoning classifications that provide additional character protection and address non-conforming issues.

**Redevelopment Area II: Texas Avenue, University Drive, and Harvey Road** - This area includes a number of underperforming land uses that, due to their proximity to two of the busiest corridors in the City, are poised for redevelopment. Much of the area is currently subdivided into small lots, making it difficult to assemble land for redevelopment. A portion of this area includes the current City Hall, which offers the opportunity to redevelop a larger parcel if City Hall is relocated to the Municipal Center District. The proximity of existing neighborhoods and

the Texas A&M University campus requires careful site planning and appropriate building design. These efforts should be complimentary to the Area V: Hospitality corridor plan, the neighborhood plan for the Eastgate area, and the Texas A&M University Campus Master Plan and should focus on bringing vertical mixed-use and other aspects of urban character to this portion of the City.

**Urban** - This land use designation is generally for areas that should have a very intense level of development activities. These areas will tend to consist of townhomes, duplexes, and high-density apartments.

**Urban Mixed Use** - This land use designation is generally for areas that should have the most intense development activities. These areas will tend to consist exclusively of residential, commercial, and office uses in vertical mixed-use structures.

### Existing Zoning

The following are descriptions of the existing zoning districts found in the Eastgate Planning Area. The locations of these zoning areas are identified in **Map EC.1, Existing Zoning (Appendix A, Existing Conditions)**.

**Single-Family Residential (R-1)** - This district includes lands planned for single-family residential purposes and accessory uses. This district is designed to accommodate sufficient, suitable residential neighborhoods, protected and/or buffered from incompatible uses, and provided with necessary and adequate facilities and services.

**Duplex Residential (R-2)** - This district contains land that has been planned for duplex residential purposes and associated uses. Characterized by moderate density, it may be utilized as a transitional zone.

**Townhouse (R-3)** - This district contains land that is to be used for a unique type of dwelling, typically designed for individual ownership, or ownership in-groups of single-family attached residences constructed on individually-platted lots.

**Multi-Family (R-4)** - This district provides land for development of apartment and condominium units at low to medium densities. This district may serve as a transitional zone between lower density residential areas and other residential or non-residential areas.

**High Density Multi-Family (R-6)** - This district contains land used for a variety of housing types, but primarily multiple family dwellings. This district is designed to provide the highest density in the community for developments in close proximity to the University.

**Administrative-Professional (A-P)** - This district accommodates select commercial businesses that provide services rather than sell products, either retail or wholesale. The uses allowed have relatively low traffic generation and require limited location identification.

**General Commercial (C-1)** - This district provides locations for general commercial purposes that is, retail sales and service uses that function to serve the entire community and its visitors.

**Commercial-Industrial (C-2)** - This district provides locations for outlets

offering goods and services to a limited segment of the general public. The uses included primarily serve other commercial and industrial enterprises.

**Light Commercial (C-3)** - This district provides locations for commercial sites that are too small for many permitted uses in the C-1, General Commercial District. These are moderately low traffic generators that have little impact on adjacent areas or on adjacent thoroughfares.

**Planned Development District (PDD)** - The purpose of the Planned Development District is to promote and encourage innovative development that is sensitive to surrounding land uses and to the natural environment. If this necessitates varying from certain standards, the proposed development should demonstrate community benefits.

The PDD is appropriate in areas where the land use plan reflects the specific commercial, residential, or mix of uses proposed in the PDD. A PDD may be used to permit new or innovative concepts in land utilization not permitted by other zoning districts. While greater flexibility is given to allow special conditions or restrictions that would not otherwise allow the development to occur, procedures are established to ensure against misuse of increased flexibility.

## KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Future Land Use

Land use is a key component of describing and establishing the character of an area. In determining appropriate land use classifications, the existing uses, zonings, and current land use and character classifications are all considered. As part of preserving the residential character of the interior Eastgate area, this plan identifies several areas where discrepancies in the existing [Comprehensive Plan](#), zoning, and other factors could lead to unintended development scenarios that are contrary to the character desired by residents that live in the neighborhood.

### *Future Land Use Assumptions – Community Character*

During the planning evaluation process, a number of areas were identified where the future land use designation conflicts with the existing zoning, existing development, or existing surrounding uses.

In evaluating the existing [Comprehensive Plan](#), there are seven areas identified for modification (See [Map 1.1, Community Character Areas of Change](#)). Strategies for preserving the character of these properties focus on amending the City's [Future Land Use and Character Map](#) to reflect more appropriate future land uses that are reflective of market opportunities for the property and future land use needs while being responsive to neighborhood compatibility.

### **Community Character Area 1 – Pasler Area**

This area generally consists of four subdivisions – Lloyd Smith, Lauterstein, Pasler, and Prairie View Heights and is bounded by Pasler Street, Lincoln Avenue, Tarrow Street, Peyton Street, and Chappel Street and the single-family properties that have frontages to these

streets. Some of the properties within this area were originally platted in 1919 and are some of the oldest subdivisions in College Station. The neighborhood has been historically African-American since its early development, and is still home to second and third generations of the original families that have made this neighborhood their home.

This area has seen major changes in the past decade with several houses demolished after purchase to convert to rental property. Because of this shift and the proximity to the University, this area has been designated for high density single-family or urban multi-family uses on the City's adopted plans since 1997.

Feedback from owner-occupants in the area during the planning process made it clear that additional rentals or potential for multi-family units would be detrimental to preserving the history and character of this core area. To assist in the preservation of this area as a single-family neighborhood, several strategies must be implemented to retain the existing single-family zoning, reduce the impact of rental properties on the community, and promote maintenance and home-ownership.

To help protect the existing character in this area, the future land uses should be amended to reflect the existing single-family land use. Second, public and private neighborhood protection standards should be explored to establish expectations for new development that occurs within the defined area (See [Neighborhood Conservation Area 3: Pasler Area](#) for more discussion on this topic). [Map 1.2, Community Character Area 1](#) illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area. Additional strategies for investing in public infrastructure and property maintenance will be explored in [Chapter 2, Neighborhood Integrity](#) and [Chapter 3, Mobility](#). Amending the [Comprehensive Plan](#) will ensure that future development opportunities will be limited to zoning districts that support single-family use of the area and set the stage for additional protections for owner-occupied homes.

**Strategy CC1.1** - Amend the [Future Land Use and Character Map](#) in the [Comprehensive Plan](#) in the Pasler area from Urban and General Suburban to Neighborhood Conservation. Also, move the Redevelopment line to the west so that it is behind the single-family lots that have frontage to Pasler Street and Banks Street.

### Community Character Area 2 – Lincoln Avenue

The area along Lincoln Avenue between Tarrow Street and University Drive East consists mostly of homes that front Lincoln Avenue with rear alley access. These homes are separated by a vacant 7.5-acre tract that backs up to the University Town Center. This area also faces large residential lots across Lincoln Avenue on Ashburn Avenue and Munson



Construction of single-family residences designed specifically as rental units has placed additional strain on the character of many College Station neighborhoods including Eastgate.



Avenue.

Currently, these properties along Lincoln Avenue are designated as Urban in the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#). This designation supports a change to denser, multi-family development. Based on feedback from the neighborhood and land owner, increased density in this area is not a desired character directly across from single-family residential. To help ensure the character remains compatible with the existing single-family in the area, while acknowledging market opportunities and adjacent non-residential development, a change to the [Future Land Use and Character Map](#) is necessary. **Map 1.3, Community Character Area 2** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area. Additional issues of site access and configuration of land uses are discussed later in this chapter (See [Site Development Area 1 – Lincoln Avenue](#)).

**Strategy CC1.2** - Amend the [Future Land Use and Character Map](#) in the [Comprehensive Plan](#) for the properties in the planning area along Lincoln Avenue east of Tarrow Street from Urban to General Suburban at an approximate depth of a single-family lot.

### **Community Character Area 3 – Grand Oaks**

Two lots in the Grand Oaks residential subdivision were incorrectly designated when the [Comprehensive Plan](#) was adopted in 2009. The property at 903 Grand Oaks Circle was designated General Commercial but developed as a single-family home in 1999 and should be classified for a residential use compatible with the surrounding residential uses. The property at 926 Grand Oaks Circle was designated both Neighborhood Conservation and General Suburban and should be designated entirely General Suburban to be consistent with the rest of the subdivision. **Map 1.4, Community Character Area 3** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC1.3** - Amend the [Future Land Use and Character Map](#) in the [Comprehensive Plan](#) from General Commercial to General Suburban for the single-family lot at 903 Grand Oaks Circle and from General Suburban and Neighborhood Conservation to General Suburban for the single-family lot at 926 Grand Oaks Circle in the Grand Oaks subdivision.

### **Community Character Area 4 – Gilchrist Avenue**

Three residential properties located adjacent to College Hills Elementary School on Gilchrist Avenue are identified as Institutional on the City's [Future Land Use and Character Map](#). This designation is typically reserved for uses such as schools or other community institutions that are unlikely to relocate. The designation of these properties was most likely a mapping error, and should be corrected for continuity with the surrounding residential land uses. **Map 1.5, Community Character Area 4** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC1.4** - Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan from Institutional to Neighborhood Conservation for the residential properties along Gilchrist Avenue adjacent to College Hills Elementary.

#### **Community Character Area 5 – Properties north of George Bush Drive East**

With the extension of George Bush Drive East, several properties were acquired by the City to accommodate the larger right-of-way. The remainder of these properties are vacant and are being developed in partnership with Keep Brazos Beautiful as a demonstration garden for the community. The area is currently designated for Urban and Redevelopment.

**Map 1.6, Community Character Area 5** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC1.5** - Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan from Urban to Natural Areas – Protected for the properties along the northwest side of George Bush Drive East between Texas Avenue South and Foster Avenue.



This area along George Bush Drive East is primarily utilized as a Keep Brazos Beautiful demonstration garden.

#### **Community Character Area 6 – Block south of George Bush Drive East**

The block bounded by George Bush Drive East, Texas Avenue South and Dominik Drive is split with two character designations. The lots on the north side of the block that front George Bush Drive East are designated as Urban and Redevelopment in the **Comprehensive Plan** and are developed as single-family residential. The lots on the block face fronting Dominik Drive are designated as Urban Mixed Use and Redevelopment and are developed with commercial uses. With aging commercial properties and single-family rental dwellings, the area is poised for redevelopment and consolidation of property on both sides of the block. In addition, given the block's location in the City and proximity to major thoroughfares, Texas Avenue South (six-lane major arterial) and George Bush Drive East (four-lane major collector), more intense development is anticipated. To create more consistency in the future development pattern, both block faces should be designated Urban with an emphasis on creating mixed-use opportunities. Additional description regarding the general scale, orientation, and relationship to nearby Neighborhood Conservation areas is discussed later in this chapter (See **Redevelopment Areas**). **Map 1.7, Community Character Area 6** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC1.6** - Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the Comprehensive Plan from Urban Mixed Use to Urban for the lots along the north side of Dominik Drive between Texas Avenue South and George Bush Drive East.

**Community Character Area 7 – Dominion on Dominik**

Except for one Neighborhood Conservation area at the intersection of George Bush Drive East and Dominik Drive, properties located along both sides of Dominik Drive east of this intersection have an Urban designation. Prior to the adoption of the [Comprehensive Plan](#) in 2009, the property was rezoned to R-3 Townhouse and developed as multi-story townhomes in 2007. This development pattern is consistent with the Urban designation of other properties along Dominik Drive which are zoned and developed for multi-family and non-residential uses. In addition, since the Wolf Pen Creek tributary is located on the opposite side of Puryear Drive, there are no natural features located on the townhome properties; therefore, the Natural Areas – Reserved designation can be removed. **Map 1.8, Community Character Area 7** illustrates the existing character and zoning as well as the proposed character, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC1.7** - Amend the Future Land Use and Character Map in the [Comprehensive Plan](#) from Neighborhood Conservation and Natural Areas – Reserved to Urban for the townhome properties located at the intersection of George Bush Drive East, Dominik Drive, and Puryear Drive.

**Zoning****Compatibility with Land Use & Character Designation**

This section outlines areas where the existing zoning does not support the future land use assumptions for the area.

**Neighborhood Conservation Areas**

The majority of single-family residential areas in the planning area are designated as Neighborhood Conservation. These areas are made up of three main subareas, each with a unique character and development pattern. **Map 1.9, Community Character Neighborhood Conservation Areas** illustrates the three identified neighborhood conservation areas.

**Neighborhood Conservation Area 1 – Woodland Acres/College Hills Woodlands**

Woodland Acres/College Hills Woodlands is an area platted in 1939 and 1940 that is made up of larger wooded lots along Munson Avenue, Ashburn Avenue, and Marsteller Avenue. Properties to the north of Francis Drive are large lots with an average lot size of 41,500 square feet, while those south of Francis Drive are smaller with an average lot size of 19,400 square feet.

In 2010, this area was the subject of a citizen-initiated rezoning effort for a Neighborhood Prevailing Overlay. The proposed overlay would have placed additional requirements on all new development in order to maintain a pattern of development. The application was ultimately withdrawn due to opposition regarding several provisions of the ordinance. The primary objections to the rezoning were restrictions on building height and expansions into the backyard. Other concerns with the proposed district included tree preservation and garage



orientation requirements.

During the process of this plan, the residents of this area identified several defining characteristics of the neighborhood that could be the focus of a conservation district - mature trees, open space around the houses that are not all paved, and large lots. A new type of conservation overlay could be created to incorporate development standards such as:

1. Increased lot size to minimize subdivision of lots into much smaller building lots;
2. Preservation of large trees such as those along the first fifteen feet of property depth of a property (20-inch caliper or greater);
3. Limited size of parking "pads" in front yards;
4. Allow rear yard expansions to not be subject to maximum lot coverage requirements;
5. Require new home construction to meet maximum lot coverage requirements that is complimentary to the existing developed character; and
6. Allow new homes to reduce front contextual setback requirements if they maintain greater side setbacks.

Wildlife and nature conservation were also areas of concern to residents in this neighborhood. In addition to the above standards, conservation easements could be established by the property owners along the floodplain behind the Ashburn Avenue lots to protect sensitive wooded and natural areas from future development (See [Floodplain Management Area 1 – Ashburn Avenue](#)). All of the property located within Neighborhood Conservation Area 1 is currently zoned R-1 Single-Family Residential.

**Strategy CC 2.1** - Develop/amend the single-family overlay ordinance options for Neighborhood Conservation Area 1 to incorporate items such as those referenced above and work with neighborhood associations to pursue a new overlay rezoning.

### **Neighborhood Conservation Area 2 – College Hills Estates**

The College Hills Estates subdivision began development in 1938. It has an overall density of 2.83 units per acre and is generally made up of single-family residential properties between Lincoln Avenue and Dominik Drive and Walton Drive and Foster Avenue. This subdivision surrounds Thomas Park, which is in an integral part of the neighborhood.

The percentage of rental properties is higher in this area than in the Woodland Acres/College Hills Woodlands area to the east, and many homes are being redeveloped or restored for rental investment properties, particularly west of Puryear Drive toward Texas Avenue.

Redevelopment of older properties has generally been viewed positively by many residents, bringing much needed improvements to substandard structures. Most input received from this area during the public input process emphasized the need to maintain different housing types, including student rentals. The need to minimize the visual impact associated with rental properties was emphasized such as excessive on-street parking and property maintenance. These issues are generally resolved through appropriate code enforcement and monitoring

policies and procedures which are covered in **Chapter 2, Neighborhood Integrity**.

Items such as parking pads, building placement, and lot coverage could be addressed through a neighborhood conservation district. A neighborhood conservation district could be established for the College Hills Estates area that incorporates the following elements:

1. Redevelop properties using previous structure setbacks to maintain eclectic layout of structures within the subdivision;
2. Decrease the allowable density from eight dwelling units per acre to five units per acre to maintain the existing developed density of the subdivision; and
3. Limit size of parking pads in front yards to maintain single-family visual character of neighborhood.

**Strategy CC2.2** - Develop/amend the single-family overlay ordinance options for Neighborhood Conservation Area 2 to incorporate items such as those referenced above. Work with neighborhood residents to identify and resolve roadblocks to adopting or implementing a new type of neighborhood overlay.

### **Zoning Area 1 – Foster Avenue**

A portion of Neighborhood Conservation Area 2 is not currently zoned R-1 Single-Family Residential. Nine properties located on the east side of Foster Avenue between Walton Drive and Francis Drive are currently zoned R-6 High Density Multi-Family. Eight of the nine properties are developed as single-family and one is developed as a duplex. The single-family properties are currently non-conforming uses, as single-family is not permitted in R-6 High Density Multi-Family districts. If redevelopment to more intensive multi-family uses were to occur, it may begin a trend that negatively impacts the integrity of this Neighborhood Conservation area. Based on the configuration of these properties however, large scale multi-family development is not likely. Rezoning to R-3 Townhouse district would allow most of the current uses to become conforming, as single-family is permitted in R-3 Townhouse, while preserving additional development potential that exists with the current zoning. **Map 1.10, Zoning Area 1** illustrates the existing zoning and character as well as the proposed zoning, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC2.3** - Approach property owners to discuss rezoning the R-6 High Density Multi-Family zoned portions along Foster Avenue between Walton Drive and Francis Drive to R-3 Townhouse to allow most of the existing uses to become conforming and encourage future development activity to be consistent with the single-family nature of the neighborhood conservation designation.

### **Neighborhood Conservation Area 3 – Pasler Area**

The Pasler area is a residential neighborhood made up of portions of four different subdivisions – Lloyd Smith, Lauterstein, Pasler, and Prairie View Heights with an overall density of 7.62 units per acre. This area was developed as a single-family neighborhood and has been

historically African-American since its development.

This area has a higher percentage of rental properties than other portions of the planning area, but remains home to many families that originally purchased property in these subdivisions.

The area began developing in 1919 and has average lot sizes between the four subdivisions that range between 5,100 square feet in Prairie View Heights (Columbus Street to the northwest) to 8,300 in Lloyd Smith (Churchill Street to Tarrow Street).

The area has seen a number of properties demolished or converted for rental or investment. Residents of the area commented during planning process on the desire to minimize additional encroachment of rental properties into the neighborhood. Strategies supporting home-ownership are discussed in **Chapter 2, Neighborhood Integrity**, while this Chapter will focus on the zoning aspect to ensure that new development is compatible in form and size to the existing homes.

Many of the concerns raised about the new construction in the area relate to buildings being built too close to the street due to existing non-conforming conditions, new structures being too tall compared to older structures, and the amount of paved or built area being too large compared to older structures and lot configurations.

With an amendment to the single-family overlay ordinance, this area would be eligible for a conservation district that could provide additional standards for new development. It is important to consider that given the development pressure for this area, a conservation district may have an impact on housing and property values in this area.

If a neighborhood conservation district were pursued, the following standards are example of items that could be appropriate for this area:

1. Height limitations to minimize privacy and massing concerns for new development and expansions;
2. Adjusted setback requirements for structures to better compliment the surrounding area;
3. Maximum lot coverage restrictions to preserve open spaces on the perimeter of lots; and
4. Increased minimum lot size to limit new subdivisions of properties.

**Strategy CC2.4** - Work with neighborhood representatives in Neighborhood Conservation Area 3 to develop/amend the single-family overlay ordinance to create an appropriate neighborhood overlay district for the area. Provide information to residents about potential impacts of implementing an overlay and support efforts by residents to pursue a zoning overlay.



The church on Churchill Street is a primary landmark in Neighborhood Conservation Area 3.

**Zoning Area 2 – 604 Tarrow Street**

A portion of the proposed Neighborhood Conservation Area 3 is not currently zoned R-1 Single-Family Residential. While the R-1 Single-Family Residential district by itself does not guarantee fulfillment of potential neighborhood conservation objectives described above, it provides an important underlying zoning for which an overlay can supplement. Approximately 0.20 acres at the northeast corner of Banks Street and Tarrow Street is zoned C-3 Light Commercial. While the 0.20 acres does not have much development potential, if a commercial use were developed, it may impact this Neighborhood Conservation area in a negative fashion. **Map 1.11, Zoning Area 2** illustrates the existing zoning and character as well as the proposed zoning, as recommended in the strategy for this area.

**Strategy CC2.5** - Approach the property owner at 604 Tarrow Street to discuss rezoning from C-3 Light Commercial to R-1 Single-Family Residential to encourage any development activity to be more compatible with the neighborhood conservation designation.

**Redevelopment Areas**

The areas designated for redevelopment along the University Drive and Texas Avenue corridors on the edges of the planning area have a wide range of uses, lot sizes, and zoning classifications. In order to implement the goals of the **Comprehensive Plan** to create redevelopment opportunities in these areas, the consolidation of properties, infrastructure investments, and creation of zoning districts should be explored to ensure appropriate and compatible redevelopment of this area.

Based on the proximity to major thoroughfares or neighborhood conservation areas, parts of the redevelopment area should allow varying degrees of vertical mixed use, commercial, or multi-family opportunities. Increasing density and creating more attractive redevelopment opportunities within the core of the City can reduce pressure on greenfield development for apartments and other student-oriented rentals toward the fringe of the City. However, in order to facilitate this redevelopment, the City's infrastructure will also need to be upgraded to meet the increased demands – including water and sanitary sewer infrastructure upgrades, extension of Eisenhower Street, improvements to Lincoln Avenue and Foster Avenue, as well as bicycle and pedestrian facilities to move residents in and around the area.

In addition to investment in public infrastructure, various land use tools could be implemented to facilitate appropriate redevelopment. For example, a redevelopment overlay could be created to specify items such as type and scale of uses, building orientation, design criteria, and building height requirements that are appropriate when considering the adjacent neighborhood conservation areas. A graduated density zoning tool could also be considered. This would allow for scaled density by lot size, allowing greater densities with larger lot sizes and thereby providing incentive for consolidation of property. The graduated zoning tool could help minimize impact to existing single-family residences until such a time when properties are

consolidated for redevelopment.

Additional descriptions and details regarding specific portions of the redevelopment area are provided in the three general subareas identified below. **Map 1.12, Community Character Redevelopment Areas** illustrates the three identified redevelopment areas. While this Plan provides some guidance to the redevelopment areas, it is not intended to constitute a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the area, which will be necessary to assist in making the desired redevelopment opportunities a reality.

### Redevelopment Area 1 – Texas Avenue to Foster Avenue

Redevelopment Area 1 consists of the first block of properties parallel to Texas Avenue between Lincoln Avenue and George Bush Drive East. This area was originally platted as part of the College Hills Estates subdivision and contains a mixture of commercial, office, multi-family, and single-family uses. Walton Drive is a primary gateway into the neighborhood with small-scale commercial uses and Eastgate Park opposite New Main Drive into the Texas A&M University campus. The block containing the College Station City Hall and the Economic & Community Development building (old Fire Station #1) has become more prominent over time as City Hall has expanded and additional properties have been acquired along Foster Avenue. The blocks between Gilchrist Avenue and George Bush Drive East (old Kyle Avenue) contain single-family uses that are largely utilized as rental units.

While these blocks have frontage on Texas Avenue and are across from the University campus, the blocks are roughly 400 feet deep and are adjacent to the front edge of Neighborhood Conservation Area 2 – College Hills Estates. While consideration should be given to market opportunities that exist with the location, these opportunities must also be balanced with the impact redevelopment will have on Neighborhood Conservation Area 2.

The properties fronting Texas Avenue along the two blocks north of Francis Drive provide smaller scale neighborhood and regional serving commercial uses. Though aging and somewhat underutilized, the businesses at Walton Drive serve as a gateway to the neighborhood and appear to compliment it well. Redevelopment or expansion of these properties will likely be hindered as much of their parking is located in public right-of-way. Additional study of this area and its related parking should be initiated to assist in maintaining its vitality as a commercial area.

Although this plan does not recommend whether City Hall should remain in its existing location or moved to the Municipal Center district off of Krenek Tap Road, public input was received on the potential redevelopment of the City Hall block and other nearby commercial areas. Many residents expressed the desire for City Hall to remain in its current location. One idea included the possibility of locating a satellite branch of the library in the area, potentially as part of City Hall. When

#### What is graduated density zoning?

Graduated density zoning is a method to encourage voluntary land assembly for infill redevelopment. The incentive to assemble land is created as higher density is permitted on larger sites, and thereby it is to the benefit of neighboring property owners to cooperate in land assemblage as greater value can be obtained through consolidation of property than with their separate, individual properties.

By requiring lower densities on smaller sites, graduated density zoning also helps protect redevelopment areas from overbuilding on single lots before larger redevelopment efforts occur.



redevelopment options were discussed, feedback included the desire that non-residential uses have more emphasis on being businesses that operate during daytime hours and are lower traffic generators, particularly for areas closer to single-family, with more intense uses oriented toward Texas Avenue. Large scale and big box type commercial development would not be appropriate in this area. Residential uses could occur as part of vertical mixed use on Texas Avenue and would have more emphasis along Foster Avenue. Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses would be possible along Foster Avenue if they were less intense, served the neighborhood, utilized design criteria, and were subjected to height restrictions.



Due to the significant redevelopment implications, further study regarding the potential of the City Hall block should occur to assist in the decision-making process.

The blocks between Gilchrist Avenue and George Bush Drive East consist of single-family uses. The lots facing George Bush Drive East were acquired for the widening of the street with the remaining portion of the lots used by Keep Brazos Beautiful as a demonstration garden in partnership with the City. While most of the remaining single-family units are rental, a few of the properties are still owner occupied. It is

anticipated that these single-family blocks will face increasing market pressure to convert to other uses. Though a City-initiated rezoning is not recommended as part of this Plan, these blocks could receive further considered as part of the redevelopment plan for this area. Graduated density zoning could also be utilized to help these blocks minimize the impact to existing single-family residences until such a time when properties are consolidated for redevelopment.

### **Redevelopment Area 2 – Eisenhower Street to Pasler Street**

Specific consideration should also be given to this redevelopment area due to its close proximity and influence to Neighborhood Conservation Area 2 – College Hills Estates and Neighborhood Conservation Area 3 – Pasler Area. This Urban and Redevelopment area consists of commercial uses along University Drive, duplexes and single-family at the core of the area, and a couple of multi-family complexes along Lincoln Avenue. This area should have lower density allowances and greater height restrictions than other Urban and Urban Mixed Use areas in order to help create a transition to the more suburban residential character in the adjacent neighborhood areas. Uses in this area should be primarily oriented towards single-family lot configurations rather than multi-family structures except for the commercial properties fronting University Drive East, where mixed use opportunities, may exist and for the existing multi-family complexes fronting Lincoln Avenue. The graduated density tool may be appropriate to help incentivize redevelopment of the existing R-2 Duplex-zoned properties along Poplar Street, Live Oak Street, and Ash Street.

### **Redevelopment Area 3 – Cornerstone Areas: Texas Avenue, University Drive, and George Bush Drive East**

This redevelopment area consists of the remaining portions not included in Redevelopment Areas 1 or 2 that are at the corners of the planning area. Redevelopment Area 3 includes two parts, one area is north of Lincoln Avenue between Texas Avenue and Eisenhower Street and the other is the block south of George Bush Drive East to Dominik Drive. With proximity to major thoroughfares, the University campus, and major shopping areas, these redevelopment areas will contain the most intensive development patterns in the Eastgate. While much of the redevelopment area is currently developed in a single-story suburban commercial pattern, it is anticipated that they will convert over time to multi-story commercial and mixed use developments with an emphasis on vertical mixed use. To promote the redevelopment, upgrades and rehabilitation of utilities, including water and sanitary sewer infrastructure and the extension of Eisenhower Street will need to occur.

#### *Redevelopment Area Strategies:*

**Strategy CC 2.6** - Incorporate the guidance identified in this Plan, into the redevelopment plan including a market analysis for the areas identified in **Redevelopment Area II: Texas Avenue, University Drive, and Harvey Road** in the **Comprehensive Plan**. The market analysis for the redevelopment plan should include a concept plan for the block containing City Hall to gauge the development potential of the block under multiple development scenarios including redevelopment of the entire block, expansion or relocation of City Hall within the block, and redevelopment of only portions of the block.

**Strategy CC 2.7** - Identify strategies regarding the existing parking in the right-of-way for the commercial properties at the intersection of Texas Avenue and Walton Drive to help maintain and increase the viability of these neighborhood serving areas. This may include removal or reduction of off-street parking requirements for this area since the existing parking serves the uses.

#### **Site Development**

##### **Site Development Area 1 – Lincoln Avenue**

Based on input received during the planning process, specific consideration should be given to the area north of Lincoln Avenue between Tarrow Street and Munson Avenue. The existing developed properties fronting Lincoln Avenue consist of single-story homes with rear alley access. Given the recommended General Suburban designation (See **Community Character Area 2 – Lincoln Avenue**), this single-family and rear alley pattern should continue across the portion of the vacant 7.5-acre tract that fronts Lincoln Avenue.

The remainder of the vacant 7.5-acre tract may develop with multi-family and/or non-residential uses. Vehicular access between these uses and the future single-family homes fronting Lincoln Avenue will be restricted so the potential for additional through traffic movements can be mitigated. The multi-family and commercial uses will receive vehicular access through the private drives of University Town Center as well as Vassar Court and Wellesley Court that are stubbed along the

western edge of the tract. When the tract develops, Wellesley Court and Vassar Court should be looped together to provide additional alternatives for vehicular access. In addition to these routes, bicyclists and pedestrians will be accommodated through the planned multi-use path to connect Lincoln Avenue and University Town Center. **Map 1.13, Site Development Area 1** illustrates the general location of this area.



The 7.5-acre tract on Lincoln Avenue behind University Town Center is the largest undeveloped property in Eastgate.

**Strategy CC3.1** - Ensure that future development proposals address land use and access concerns through a PDD Planned Development District zoning that incorporates single-family along Lincoln Avenue, multi-family and/or commercial behind these uses to University Town Center, the extensions of Wellesley Court and Vassar Court, and the identified access restrictions.

#### Site Development Area 2 – Avenue A

Avenue A is located along Lincoln Avenue between Nimitz Street and the future extension of Eisenhower Street and consists of 17 single-family lots. The street is roughly 500 feet in length and currently dead ends without a cul-de-sac bulb or stub for future extension. Fire code regulations require turnarounds on streets or fire lanes in excess of 100 feet in length. As part of Redevelopment Area 2, the properties on this street are designated for Urban character. The properties near the end of Avenue A may redevelopment for more intense uses such as duplex, townhouse or multi-family if Avenue A is extended to the future Eisenhower Street to the west or a cul-de-sac bulb provided to help facilitate compliance with the fire code. **Map 1.14, Site Development Area 2** illustrates the general location of this area.

**Strategy CC3.2** - Ensure that future development proposals near the end of Avenue A address emergency access concerns through a PDD Planned Development District zoning that could incorporate duplex, townhouse, or multi-family uses and extends Avenue A to future Eisenhower Street to the west or provides a cul-de-sac for the street.

#### Floodplain Management

This section identifies properties located in areas that are designated floodplain or should be reserved for environmental or recreational purposes. **Map 1.15, Floodplain and Open Space** highlights the properties in the area that are identified as Natural Areas – Reserved or Natural Areas – Protected.

The planning area is impacted by two tributaries of Wolf Pen Creek and a small finger of a tributary to Burton Creek. Proposed strategies focus on the creation of conservation easements to preserve these areas.

### Floodplain Management Area 1 – Ashburn Greenway

The most significant tributary of Wolf Pen Creek in the planning area is designated as Natural Areas – Reserved and can be generally described as the creek area behind or within the lots along the west side of Ashburn Avenue. The City currently owns two lots that are part of this tributary, Lots 17 & 18, Block 5, University Oaks subdivision at 733 & 801 Dominik Drive. All of the remaining Natural Areas – Reserved portions in the planning area are currently zoned R-1 Single-Family Residential on privately owned property as part of single-family lots, on the College Hills Elementary property, or within the 7.44-acre property owned by Texas A&M University System at 906 Ashburn Avenue.

Residents in the area have stated some of the unique features of the neighborhood include the mature trees, wooded areas, and wildlife. To help protect these features, a conservation easement could be dedicated along the floodplain of the creek so that it and associated wooded areas are preserved in a natural state while staying in private ownership. Completion of this effort will help the residents protect this important characteristic of the neighborhood while reserving the remainder of their lots for typical single-family use.

**Strategy CC4.1** - Develop a conservation easement program to help preserve floodplain and riparian areas for their natural function.

**Strategy CC4.2** - Encourage and assist property owners along the Ashburn Greenway to voluntarily participate in the dedication of conservation easements to help preserve the creek, floodplain, and wooded riparian areas.

### Floodplain Management Area 2 – 400 Kyle Avenue and 401 Dominik Drive

The second Wolf Pen Creek tributary in this planning area is contained mostly in Thomas Park. As discussed in **Chapter 3, Mobility**, installation of curb, gutter, and underground stormwater system are proposed on portions of Puryear Drive and James Parkway in part to help resolve drainage issues in the area. Downstream of Thomas Park, a church currently owns the properties at 400 Kyle Avenue and 401 Dominik Drive which include wooded areas located in the floodplain. Conservation easements on the floodplain portion of these properties will help maintain the natural function of the creek and protect the wooded area.

**Strategy CC4.3** - Encourage and assist the property owner at 400 Kyle Avenue and 401 Dominik Drive to voluntarily participate in the dedication of a conservation easement to help preserve the creek, floodplain, and wooded riparian areas south of Thomas Park.



Riparian areas such as this one south of Thomas Park should be protected for their natural function and open space.